

Should Revolutionists Build A Labor Party?

By HUGO OEHLER

Leftward-moving workers who have broken or are in the process of breaking with the past are looking for weapons of struggle to the left of the Democratic and Republican parties.

Reform and utopian movements and middle class movements as well as fascist movements are springing up and taking root in the minds of the disoriented masses who know by hard experience that something is wrong.

Every prolonged depression in the past increased the political activity of the working class. Reform and utopian movements spring up on the heels of economic and social dislocation. These movements were washed away with the first signs of the return to prosperity. But the present crisis continues. Government and private measures to stimulate business fail. The condition of the working class becomes worse and discontent increases. Hoover's promises could not be realized and Roosevelt's "plans" for the forgotten man are more and more seen as plans for the "forgotten" financiers and industrialists.

In this fermentation the slogan of the Labor Party is brought forward again. As yet it has not taken root in any substantial section of the working class nor has a crystallization taken place. However, the new opportunist right turn of the Communist International and its sections and the issuing of the instructions for a Labor Party campaign bring the subject to the fore for clarification.

Labor Parties and Reform
In the period of capitalist development the Labor Party took root in Europe as the handmaid of reforms, as the concession for class peace through the policy of class collaboration with the capitalist overlords. These reformist labor movements took on different forms in various nations all the way from Labor Parties based upon collective membership through trade unions and other workers' organizations to the Social Democratic movements of individual membership. In the pre-war period they constituted the progressive and liberal opposition parties championing the cause of labor, humanity and what not. In the post-war period these parties became the left covering of the capitalist governments for the reorganization of Europe and for the prevention of the extension of the October revolution. They were labor governments in name but

capitalist dictatorships in reality. Since the rise of Hitler and fascism in Europe this has become plain for everyone to see.

Capitalist Decay
But the post-war period revealed another striking fact in regard to the Labor parties and the parties of reform.

Developing capitalism could grant reforms, and such were granted to the degree of the pressure of the working class, and the labor leaders of the reactionary trade union movement and the labor party movement held them up as special concessions these "leaders" had obtained "for" the working class. But the post-war period marked a deepening of the decay and decline of capitalism. Many of the leading capitalist nations were in no position to grant further reforms. Instead the very life of the different capitalist nations after the war period demanded that they reduce and take away concessions from the workers, in order to compete with imperialist powers on the world market for capital investments, commodities and raw material.

Every concession wrung from the capitalists in this stage rests upon an entirely different basis than the previous reforms. The reforms in the period of capitalist growth were used to bribe a part of the working class to enable the capitalists to have a free hand against the majority of the working class and the colonial people. The most outstanding representative of reform during this period was the Second International.

Reform Base Disappearing
The economic base of reform parties has been wiped out by the conditions of capitalist decline. But it was not a uniform process which accomplished this condition. In America the whole process lagged behind European developments. The permanent miserable conditions confronting the American workers since the beginning of the present crisis were far deeper reforms in Europe even before the first world war.

The elimination of the economic base of reform parties did not mean the immediate liquidation of these parties. The parties had developed into complex systems and definite parts of the superstructure of capitalism whose organizational and ideological structure could not be killed so easily. Even after their economic base was lacking these reformist parties served as the instruments to save European capitalism from the proletarian revolution.

"New" reforms were the price to be paid by the capitalists as the "lesser evil" to maintain power. Developments have shown that such concessions, especially since Hitler seized power, can be wiped out with the stroke of a pen.

The sweep of developing American capitalism enabled her to build a whole network of special means of bribery without the aid of a large layer of labor agents within the workers' ranks. While a relatively small number of skilled workers was placed on a high level, the masses of American workers, the oppressed races and foreign born workers within the country, and the colonial people, paid the hand of robbers super profits. This was not a difficult problem for the American capitalists due to the country's natural resources and high degree of exploitation of labor.

The millions of American workers were unorganized and labor's participation in politics was confined to the two old parties. While social-reformism flourished in Europe it was not even budding in America. It bloomed and withered in Europe before its American counterpart had a chance to walk upright.

The radical political movement of American origin was first a labor reform movement in the form of the last century, next an agrarian movement of the eighties, to be followed by a more confused and heterogeneous agrarian movement in the first part of this century. The urban middle class was joined forces with it and produced the various hybrid movements such as the Farmer-Labor parties and the La Follette movement.

(This article will be continued in the next issue of the New Militant.)

Credits for Russia-- A Slogan for U. S. Labor

By TESS HUFF

In a newspaper, among the letters to the editor, recently I ran across a letter something like this: "Dear Editor—Why doesn't the United States grant the Soviet Union long term credits, so she can buy American made machinery, which is needed in the Second Five Year Plan? The capital goods industry in the U. S. are at a low ebb and need work. The Soviets want credit. What is the trouble?"

In a newspaper, last week, was a letter from a business man. The business man complained that the U. S. was getting very little trade from Russia and ended by saying: "At the time diplomatic relations were established between our government and Russia, it was said that Russia would spend 10 billion dollars for American goods. This was absolutely untrue and our government should break off relations with Russia immediately."

A Bit Mixed Up
Well, it appears the matter is a bit mixed up, as you may see. Incidentally, the business man failed to mention credit, and no nation can trade without credits! It is true that the Soviet Union needs machinery and wants credit. Likewise it is true that capital goods factories in this country need orders. It is also a fact since the day of diplomatic recognition, in November 1933, trade with Russia has steadily declined.

The paradox becomes more and more glaring, the more you consider the case. The fact is that the United States not only needs Russia's business, but that it has credit powers it doesn't know what to do with. At the same time Russia, of all the major nations, is probably the only one which still has a clean credit slate. Since the proletarian took power in 1917, and started out on a grand scale to build up Russian economy, requiring big orders of machinery and goods from any and every corner of the world, every debt contracted has been paid when due. And at the present moment, despite the world depression, Soviet capacity for payment is greater than ever before.

Why the Deadlock?
Why then the deadlock? What has happened since the Roosevelt-Litvinoff talks in Washington, in 1933? Why did credit and trade, much talked of then and badly needed by both countries, not materialize?

The answer has to do of course with politics.

The answer is that the Roosevelt-Litvinoff talks, which were apparently so amiable, turned out in a "misunderstanding", a misunderstanding on which both nations are standing still. Roosevelt, and Wall Street, still insist upon the payment of debts owed by the Czarist and Kerensky regimes. This was the money, much of it, advanced by American capitalists, which was used to finance the various White armies in their unsuccessful attempts to overthrow the young proletarian government in 1919-21.

The Soviet insistence, however, is that the White House talks were of another tenor. Both debt claims, those of the U. S. against Russia, and those of Russia against the U. S. (claims which grew out of American intervention in Russia in 1921, when the U. S. sent expeditionary forces on Russian soil and against the proletarian government) were to be mutually adjusted at a later date. Meanwhile normal trade relations were to go forward.

Since the day of recognition the American government has stood pat, making no attempts either to negotiate a settlement of the claims or to establish a basis for trade and long term credits with Russia. And Russia refuses of course to obligate herself for the payment of the

NOTICE
In last week's New Militant Comrade Louis Breier in the 4th installment of his History of the National Unemployed League dealt with the question of unity. Comrade Breier's article does not represent the position of the Workers Party. The Party's position on unity will be put forth in an article by Comrade Max Shachtman in a forthcoming issue of the New Militant.

Food Workers Bare Union's Alliance with Schultz Gang

An Example of the New Trade Union Policy of the Communist Party

(Introductory note by Joseph Zack)

The Food Workers Industrial Union (split off in 1929 by the Communist Party from the Amalgamated Food Workers) started as an "ideal" Red Union. With less than 2,000 members it endorsed the Communist party and addressed demands to the bosses that could not possibly be obtained without the widest organization.

This policy brought the union close to liquidation. The food workers wanted a union; by tradition and as a result of their experience with the American Federation of Labor, they were inclined to join an independent union. The writer, then secretary of the Trade Union Unity Council, in 1931 endeavored to reorganize the union to suit the needs of the rank and file. Jack Rubin became secretary.

Today, with the C. P. swinging to the right, Rubin, along with Gold, Potash and others, wants to be in line with the party or perhaps a step or two ahead. In the name of flexibility and practicality, they are introducing class collaboration policies of a kind familiar in the A. F. of L.—a policy as sure to ruin the independent unions as the policy of Red unions did before.

It is very well to be practical and to take advantage of quarrels between bosses and labor fakery—but not at the expense of the workers and the prestige of the union. If the union is to live in the workers' interests, the Stalinist bureaucracy must be halted.

By a Group of Progressive Food Workers

Mystery, telephone conversations in Rubin's office, conferences, maneuvers—only the top fraction of the Communist Party is in on the secrets, and not all of it. Some of these "insiders" think Rubin is clever—delicate politics must be played in secret. Others are suspicious—a active rank and file is suspicious—a suspicion that may flare into a hurricane.

On the other side of the alliance, Coulicher and Co. do quite a bit of talking which percolates down to the masses as rumor. To calm the class-conscious element, the mysteries are finally theorized into a "united front" and since there are still some doubts, Stachel, of the C. P. Political Bureau, is brought to the Central Opera House meeting (Dec. 17, 1934) to declare it "kosher".

What is this United Front?

The "united front" that Stachel boasts about is a "gentleman's understanding" behind closed doors, between Rubin, Stachel, Coulicher, Pincus Goldstein and Co., officials of A. F. of L. Locals 302 and 16 and the Industrial Union. The rank and file know very little about it.

Why? Because it is a shady, unprincipled alliance between the leaders of the Food Workers Industrial Union and one of the racketeering gangs in the food industry in control of Locals 16 and 302, hand in hand with the new Metropolitan bosses' association in the cafeteria and restaurant trade.

This racket into which the Industrial Union got hooked through Rubin and Stachel could not stand daylight because it is not in the interests of the workers.

C. P. "Unity" in 1935
Let us examine a bit the united front allies of Rubin and Stachel. Radek and Coulicher, A. F. of L. leaders of Local number 16, during the general hotel strike in 1933 took out an injunction against the Amalgamated Food Workers. It is naive to suppose that suddenly they have turned honest labor leaders, working for unity!

We also know that J. J. Williams and Pincus H. Goldstein, officials of the Industrial Union, after getting what they wanted three months ago forced their members back to work under old conditions in spite of the fact that the bosses had conceded the majority of the strikers' demands.

Only a year ago these officials expelled 12 opposition members who carried out inside the A. F. of L. the major part of the Industrial Union's program. In short, begin-

ning with 1929 and continuing to a few months ago, Williams and Goldstein acted as open strike breakers for the bosses' association in the cafeteria industry.

Jules Martin who acts as a politician behind the scenes for the new Metropolitan bosses' association, and is the real theoretician and inspirer of this united front, is one of the big capitalists in the trade. Dave Krumboltz, organizer for the Metropolitan, is his lieutenant.

These, then, are Rubin's allies. Every progressive worker in the food industry knows that the organizers of Locals 16 and 302 are connected with the Dutch Schultz mob.

It is also established fact that in April, 1933, the books of Local 302 showed that \$2,500 was turned over to Jules Martin, who worked hand in hand with Dutch Schultz, after a conference between the gang and Local 302 officials in a midtown hotel. To this day special monthly taxes are collected in Local 302 which go directly to the gang.

The new Metropolitan Cafeteria and Restaurant Association is the offspring of this alliance between A. F. of L. officials and gangsters. It was the old United bosses' association which inspired the creation of Local 302 in 1929 in order to break the cafeteria strike led by the Amalgamated Food Workers. The unions created by the old association are now used by the Dutch Schultz crowd to terrorize the bosses into joining the new Metropolitan association, with an initiation fee of \$500 up. Into this unholy alliance, the leaders of the Industrial Union have entered.

How the "Unity" Works in Practice
The old United bosses' association, which was working with the officials of the International Union of H.R.R.J.A. is being broken up by the manipulations of the Dutch Schultz gang and Jules Martin, who want to get the real gravy for themselves and keep the International union out. By getting control of labor, and through it, of the bosses' association, they expect to work the racket both ways, at the expense chiefly of the workers.

What can you workers think of the united front policy of the C.P. if it can so easily become a cover for these maneuvers? Some will say, Beal among them, what do we care as long as we get something out of it? Now Beal, a leader of the top fraction, darling of the mobsters who was repeatedly brought up on charges of corrupt practices, and whitewashed—Beal gets something out of it. But how about the workers?

Some Pertinent Questions
Is it not a fact that in the Sherman Cafeteria settlement, the exact terms of which are not known to the rank and file, the following conditions exist:

1. The wages of the workers earning \$14 to \$16 per week have not been increased in spite of the fact that they are far below standard.
2. Those who worked during the strike and were accepted into the union afterward are keeping their jobs while the militants among the strikers are being weeded out one by one? Thus far the union has done nothing about it.
3. The company hires and fires

practically at will, and gradually all companies "protected" by the Metropolitan association are being allowed this privilege?

4. As soon as the Sherman Cafeterias broke with the old United association and joined the Metropolitan, the strike was called off by the union with a 90-day period for negotiations?

Considering the past of Coulicher and Co., would it not be fair to allow the rank and file to decide whether it wants this kind of a united front?

What about the recent Silver Cafeteria settlement, whereby the shops are being divided 50-50 between the Industrial Union and its allies? Is this a policy of uniting the workers into one union, or is it a process of systematic division into two unions with the bosses playing one against the other and the bureaucrats maneuvering its slips on the other?

If these are the methods, have we not a right to suspect the purpose for which the special monthly taxes are being collected in the Industrial Union? Is it not for the same purpose for which the A. F. of L. Local 302 collected a \$2 monthly work tax? Why don't we get a regular and aboveboard accounting?

The strangling of inner democracy goes hand in hand with such politics. Food workers, be on guard!

WHAT TO ATTEND

Philadelphia
Feb. 10, Sunday, 8 P.M., Grand Fraternity Building—Open Forum: "Will Fascism come to the U. S.?" Speaker: Sol Feinstein.

Allentown
Feb. 23, Saturday, 8 P.M.—Card Party, Ardmore Workers Party, At 9th Ward Unemployed League Hall, 14 No. 4th Street.

New York City
Feb. 9, Saturday, 8 P.M.—Housewarming Party, Harlem branch, 29 West 120th St., cor. Lenox Ave.
Feb. 10, Sunday, 3 P.M.—"Coming Strike Struggles in Steel, Auto and Rubber." Speaker: A. J. Muste, recently returned from a national tour.

Feb. 15, Friday evening, Labor Temple, 14th St. and 2nd Avenue. Forum, Aspicase, Branch No. 1.
Feb. 15, Friday, 8 P.M.—John S. Wright & Co. "The Workers Need a Labor Party?" Boro Park Br., 1281 49th Street, Brooklyn.

Feb. 16, Saturday night, Germania Hall, Red Cabaret and Dance. An interesting program has been arranged. Get your tickets in advance and save 25 cents. See ad in this issue.

Feb. 17, Sunday, 2:30 P.M., Irving Plaza—Debate on "Which Program for American Labor?" Speakers: A. J. Muste and Jay Lovestone.

PHILADELPHIA WORKMEN'S SICK & DEATH BENEFIT FUND, Inc.
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Nature Friends - Puljer's Orchestra
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Saturday Feb. 16th
KENSINGTON LABOR LYCEUM
2915-24 North Second St.
Continuous Dancing - 2 Orchestras
Program begins at 7:30 P.M.
Admission 25c, including Wardrobe

St. Louis Socialist Finds Workers Party Is Realistic

SP is Hopeless, He Says--In N. Y., E. Martin Leaves Weisbord Group To Join W. P.

"I am resigning from the Socialist Party and joining the Workers Party of the U. S., the only party which at the present time offers the working class effective and realistic leadership on the basis of a correct program," writes John Burfeindt of St. Louis.

Another comrade, E. Martin, formerly of the Weisbord group, joins the Workers Party because it is the only party working effectively for a new international of labor.

Their letters follow in full:
St. Louis, Mo.
January 29, 1935

Comrades:

The experience of the world labor movement since the war convinced me that social democracy and reformism can only lead the workers to defeat and fascism. My experience in the Socialist Party has convinced me that the S. P. has not abandoned reformism; that, both locally and nationally, it compromises continually with reformists and reactionaries on the political and trade union fields and in its own ranks; and that it is hopeless as an instrument of revolution, due to its unbroken tradition of compromise and the weak-kneed character of its so-called left wing.

I am therefore resigning from the Socialist Party and joining the Workers Party of the U. S., the only party which at the present time offers the working class effective and realistic leadership on the basis of a correct program.

—JOHN BURFEINDT
January 5, 1935

Comrades:

As a member of the Communist League of Struggle, I worked towards the creation of a new revolutionary party and a new (4th) International.

Weisbord is incorrect in saying that the fusion of the C.L.A. and the A.W.P. is similar to the entry of the Communist League of France into the S.F.I.O. in the United States. A Fourth Internationalist party has been founded by the merger of two independent groups on a Marxist basis.

The "leadership" of the C.L.S. with its sectarian attitude and bureaucratic domination, tried to squelch criticism of Weisbord's interpretation of his principal questions, by saying that at this

time the C.L.S. could not tolerate any "negations" concerning them. In other words if you didn't agree with the leader your criticism was negative.

Having abandoned the position that the C.L.S. was the "one and only truly, 'Trotskyist' group" and that "Trotskyism is the Leninism of today" (see pamphlet "What is Trotskyism", by V. Bush) Weisbord now counterposes Trotskyism to Leninism, in the same way that the Stalinists do.

Only a few months ago Weisbord ran to the conference called by Gitlow for the formation of a new party. Today Gitlow is in the Socialist Party and the C.L.S. having split, Weisbord remains with his family of nine, the fruit of three and a half years of independent "mass work".

Although many comrades were in favor of sending a delegation to the Unity convention, no discussion was held on this subject and not even an observer was sent.

These are my reasons for leaving the C.L.S.

I accept the Declaration of Principles adopted by the new party convention, and apply for membership in the Workers Party. Whatever shortcomings exist in the new party can be ironed out within the bounds of party democracy. Everyone claiming to work towards the creation of the Fourth International must realize that only by joining the Workers Party and becoming active in it can they contribute towards this goal.

—E. MARTIN

WORKERS' SECURITY?

PHILADELPHIA, Feb. 5.—Anthony Kamaglia, president of the National Unemployed League, in a talk on "The Roosevelt Security Program" Sunday evening, pointed out the effects of the "Program" on the unemployed and employed workers of the country. He showed how in each instance every step in the program meant another lowering of the American standard of living.

Ramaglia explained that where the National Unemployed League was strongest as in Ohio and Pennsylvania, the relief authorities found it impossible to put over their schemes for pauperizing the workers.

International Workers School Term Near

REGISTRATION

Registrations for the classes of the International Workers School are rolling in. From present signs the maximum quotas for some of the classes may be filled before the school officially opens, on February 18. Register immediately. Send for the school bulletin.

CLASSES

The variety of classes makes it possible for all to take one or more courses. Elementary classes include Workers Party Fundamentals, A B C of Marxism and Marxian Economics, American history, American labor history. The course in Trade Union Strategy and Tactics is intended for active trade unionists. The courses in History of the Three Internationals, Philosophy of the Russian Revolution are for more advanced comrades.

Invaluable for members of the Workers Party and Spartacus Youth League is the class in Organization Principles to be given by Martin Abern. Note that the time of this class has been changed to Monday evening, 7 to 8:30 P.M. For members of the Spartacus Youth League and Workers Party representatives to youth committees, the course on History and Problems of the Youth Movement should be very valuable.

SCHOLARSHIPS

Several scholarships are being offered to trade union locals, unemployed groups and branches of the Spartacus Youth League. To defray the expense we call upon our friends to contribute generously. International Workers School, at 2 West 15th Street, New York City.

INTERNATIONAL WORKERS SCHOOL

First Year—Winter 1935. Beginning Feb. 18, 1935
MONDAY, 7-8:30 P.M.—Workers Party Fundamentals—B. Borkeston
MONDAY, 7-8:30 P.M.—Organizational Principles—M. Abern.
MONDAY, 8:40-10:00 P.M.—Elementary English—F. Becker
MONDAY, 8:40-10:10 P.M.—American History—Felix Morrow.
WEDNESDAY, 7-8:30 P.M.—Marxian Economics (vol. 1)—H. Oestler
WEDNESDAY, 7-8:30 P.M.—American Labor History—A. J. Muehr.
WEDNESDAY, 8:40-10:10 P.M.—History of the Three Internationals—M. Shachtman.
THURSDAY, 7-8:30 P.M.—Trade Union Strategy and Tactics—A. Swabeck.
THURSDAY, 7-8:30 P.M.—Philosophy of Marxism—Grote.
FRIDAY, 7-6:30 P.M.—History and Problems of the Youth Movement—N. Gond.
FRIDAY, 8:40-10:10 P.M.—A B C of Marxism—Jack Weber.
FRIDAY, 8:40-10:10 P.M.—History of the Russian Revolution—Wm. Duncan.
Ten sessions for each course; one evening a week.
Fees: \$2.00 per course, payable in three installments: \$1 at time of registration, and two 50c installments within 3 weeks.
The International Workers School is ready to give any additional classes if a minimum of fifteen workers request it. For further information regarding the school, get in touch with Joseph Carter, School Administrator, at 2 West 15th Street, New York City.

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In advance 49c At the door 75c
Tickets at International Workers School, 2 West 15th St., N. Y. C.

The PIONEER PUBLISHERS
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